

Adult Protective Services for Health Professionals

- According to the National Center on Elder Abuse, only one out of 14 domestic adult abuse cases is reported.
- Health professionals, including nurses, doctors, pharmacists, and dentists, frequently care for an adult in need of protective services.
- Health professionals are mandated reporters according to the *Code of Virginia*. This means that health professionals are required by law to report suspected cases of abuse, neglect, or exploitation of an elder or adult with disabilities to Adult Protective Services (APS) at their local department of social services.
- In a study conducted in 1997 by the Medical College of Virginia, only 19 percent of doctors had received training on adult abuse.
- APS assists clients who are 60 years of age and older and adults 18 years of age and older with a disability who have been neglected, abused, or exploited or may be at risk.
- Many cases of neglect, abuse, and exploitation are undetected because of lack of knowledge.
- If an adult is being abused, neglected, or exploited, he or she may not show up for appointments or may frequently change health care providers.
- Abused, neglected, or exploited adults are more likely to change doctors, but retain their dentist.
- Signs of abuse, neglect, or exploitation include:
 - ✓ verbal abuse by a caregiver
 - ✓ lesions
 - ✓ cigarette burns
 - ✓ bruises
 - ✓ tooth fractures
 - ✓ bites
 - ✓ bone fractures on x-rays
 - ✓ hemorrhage
 - ✓ delay in medical care, and
 - ✓ poor dental hygiene
 - ✓ retinal detachment
 - ✓ pharmaceuticals not being picked up
- If there is suspicion of abuse, neglect, or exploitation, call and report to the local department of social services. Speak with an APS professional.
- Calls to APS may help provide services for adults in need and can be anonymous (under the *Code of Virginia*).

**To contact adult protective services, call your local department of social services or the 24-hour toll-free hotline at
1-888-832-3858.**